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SUBJECT: CANADA ANNOUNCES NEW AFGHAN AID IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH UNICEF AND WFP

¶1. (U) Summary: On December 20, Canadian Minister of International Cooperation Josee Verner announced that Canada will contribute C\$4.5 million to UNICEF and C\$4 million to the World Food Program (WFP) to assist families in Kandahar province. Minister Verner said that "Canada is committed to supporting Afghanistan in its efforts to address the basic needs of its most vulnerable citizens. Today's contributions to UNICEF and the World Food Program will improve the lives of tens of thousands of people living in Kandahar, primarily women and children, by providing food aid, improving health and nutrition, access to clean water and basic shelter." End Summary.

¶2. (U) UNICEF will provide 20,000 families with non-food items such as tents, blankets and warm jackets which are needed as winter approaches. With Canada's support, UNICEF will also provide health and medical supplies to hospitals and clinics as well as micro-nutrients to children and pregnant women. Through UNICEF, support will be given to the Public Health Department's measles vaccination campaign to immunize as many as 189,000 children. Through the Afghan Department of Education, UNICEF will procure and distribute materials for about 40,000 students who are now going to school in temporary centers. The non-food aid focus of the UNICEF initiatives complements Canada's C\$4 million commitment to the WFP to provide food assistance to about 31,000 families in Kandahar who have been affected by the conflict and by a drought. The funding is in response to the WFP's Drought Joint Appeal to help displaced persons in Kandahar.

¶3. (U) The announcement of aid builds on existing initiatives. In October, Minister Verner announced a C\$4.9 million emergency food aid contribution to the WFP and a C\$5 million to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative to immunize all children in southern Afghanistan against polio. Canada is contributing nearly \$1 billion over 10 years aimed at reconstruction, reducing poverty and strengthening Afghan governance.

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